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AUTHOR Helge, Doris
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ABSTRACT

The supplement describes instructional alternatives for a curriculum module addressing stress reduction for rural teachers of special education. Designed to help teach the personal survival and development skills that special education teachers need to live and work in rural communities, the module helps teachers understand stress and its potential effects on their professional performance; understand the interacting cognitive, affective, and physiological aspects of stress; explore stress reduction techniques; and begin to develop a personalized master plan for stress reduction. The supplement describes the instructor's major tasks when teaching the module and the necessary preparation for teaching the classes. Organized similarly to the student text, the supplement indicates the major points and explains primary and alternative activities for each section. The supplement includes 12 transparency masters for the module and a list of optional reading and supplemental materials. (SB)

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INSTRUCTOR'S SUPPLEMENT FOR THE CURRICULUM MODULE:

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE SURVIVAL AS A RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATOR

Prepared by: Doris Helge, Ph.D.
Director, National Rural Project
Murray State University
Murray, KY 42071

July, 1983

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	1
Purpose of the Module	1
Introduction to the Instructor's Supplement	4
Instructor Preparation	5
Antecedents	5
Activities	6
Major Points to be Perceived	6
Suggestions for Extended Use of the Items	6
Activities by Subsection	7
I. Introduction to Stress Concepts and Effects for Rural Special Educators	8
II. Cognitive Methods of Reducing Stress	16
III. Affective Methods of Stress Reduction	23
IV. Physiological Methods of Stress Reduction	27
V. Summary	29
Optional Readings/Supplemental Materials	30-31
Bibliography	32

PURPOSE OF THE MODULE

Attrition rates for rural special educators are inordinately high. In fact, the attrition or "burnout" rate for rural special educators is commonly 40% with a range as high as 100% in some remote school districts. (Helge, 1981). Rural special education personnel frequently leave even highly satisfying positions for reasons related to personal stress. Hundreds of rural special educators interviewed in the 1979-81 studies of the National Rural Project stated that they or their colleagues left rural special education positions because of stress. The individuals interviewed reported that their stress related to (1) inadequate social opportunities and (2) lack of satisfying interactions with peer professionals, parents of the children they taught, and/or individuals within the community.

A vast majority (66%) of rural school districts/cooperatives have serious problems recruiting and retaining special educators (Helge, 1983). When special education personnel turnover is frequent, handicapped students suffer because of a lack of continuity of services.

A 1980 U. S. Office of Special Education Programs Briefing Paper stated that rural personnel shortages are the most acute of any because preservice programs have not prepared special education personnel who are able to adjust to the demands of remote, isolated, or culturally distinct rural areas. Sontag and Button (1980) summarized that the difficulty posed by such rural areas is not the problem of preparing quantities or sheer numbers of teachers, but of preparing teachers who are willing and capable of teaching in areas posing disincentives for the majority of teachers.

A 1980-81 National Rural Project (NRP) study of universities concluded that universities were not systematically training students for competencies identified as necessary for rural special educators. Because preservice preparation programs are typically doing an outstanding job of training students to understand and work with various exceptionalities, this module addresses the personal survival and development skills needed to successfully live and work in rural communities. Areas of foci relate to responses to a 1983 NRP study of 200 rural special educators. A majority of practitioners in this study related that they had not received training in coping with rural cultures and mores nor in techniques to facilitate one's personal acceptance in the community. Respondents emphasized the need for training to improve their interactions with the entire rural educational system (including community members). Respondents stated these facts in the context of resultant high rates of stress and reported that stress reduction techniques could possibly reduce rural attrition rates (Helge, 1983).

The primary objectives for this module are listed below.

1. To understand the concept of stress and its potential effects on the student's performance as a rural special educator.
2. To understand the three interactive domains of stress (cognitive, affective, and physiological).
3. To understand and begin to explore cognitive methods of stress management.

4. To understand and gain experience with affective methods of stress management.
5. To be aware of physiological methods of stress management.
6. To begin to develop a Personalized Master Plan for Stress Reduction and to understand that it must be consistently updated.

INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTOR'S SUPPLEMENT

This supplement describes instructional alternatives for each section of the document, Personal Development Skills and Strategies for Effective Survival As A Rural Special Educator. Activities of the module are relatively self-instructional. Major tasks for the instructor will include organizing the class structure and conducting thorough feedback or "debriefing" sessions. Faculty are encouraged to relate class activities to practica and other experiential rural school/community resources wherever possible.

The instructor is encouraged to add his/her own ideas and information available from various publications on stress management to the material presented here. A list of suggested readings is included on pages 30 - 31, and alternative activities are described on pages 8, 9, 22, 23, 24, 27, and 29.

Each of the Task Sheets in Appendix A may require a minimum of thirty minutes of time for completion. As a result, instructors may need to prioritize selection of the various activities, rather than completing them all, depending upon time constraints. To assist with this process, the major points to be perceived by participants have been specified below for each section of the module. In addition, alternative activities, where possible, have been suggested. Transparency masters are provided for recommended activities.

INSTRUCTOR PREPARATION

The instructor should read the student text for the curriculum module, Personal Development Skills and Strategies for Effective Survival as a Rural Special Educator. The module requires only an overhead projector and a screen. The classroom must have the potential for working in small group sessions. An optional suggestion is that a teletrainer be secured from a telephone company. This would allow the instructor/students to devise and conduct realistic telephone conversations with "community members" regarding several of their tasks in the module.

ANTECEDENTS

Although it is not essential, the instructor may find it helpful to read Images: Issues and Trends in Rural Special Education - January, 1983 and the curriculum module, The State-of-the-Art of Rural Special Education. Both are available from the National Rural Project. The Warren Springs County Special Education Cooperative: A Rural Preservice Simulator is also available for faculty who wish to familiarize less experienced students with a "typical" rural special education setting. Instructors may also wish to have students "live and work" in Warren Springs as they implement activities of the module. This might be of particular assistance to students who are less familiar with rural special education environments.

ACTIVITIES

For reader convenience, activities are integrated with the descriptions of each of the five major sections of the module (pages 8, 16, 23, 27, and 29. These are described in a sequential order consistent with the Student Text.

MAJOR POINTS TO BE PERCEIVED

The major foci of each subsection are alsc integrated with the descriptions of each of the five components (pages 8, 16, 23, 27, and 29).

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTENDED USE OF THE ITEMS

Optional uses of activities are encouraged and are mentioned in the context of each subsection, as it is described.

ACTIVITIES BY SUBSECTION

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION TO STRESS CONCEPTS AND EFFECTS FOR RURAL SPECIAL EDUCATORS

Major Points to be Perceived

The major points to be perceived in this section include:

1. a definition of stress
2. an understanding of the dynamics involved in stress
3. potential effects of stress on the performance of the rural special educator, and
4. the objectives involved in developing a Personalized Master Plan for Stress Reduction.

Activities

To teach these concepts, the instructor should review the Introduction Section of the document, Personal Development Skills and Strategies for Effective Survival As A Rural Special Educator (pages 1 - 3). It is suggested that its content be used in a formal lecture or presentation. Transparency masters for supplementing the lecture/presentation are included on pages 10 - 15. The time required for presenting this introductory material is estimated to be one hour.

Alternate Activities

The instructor may wish to assign one or more of the following references regarding stress and stress reduction. Complete citations are listed in the Optional Readings/Supplemental Materials list on pages 30 - 31.

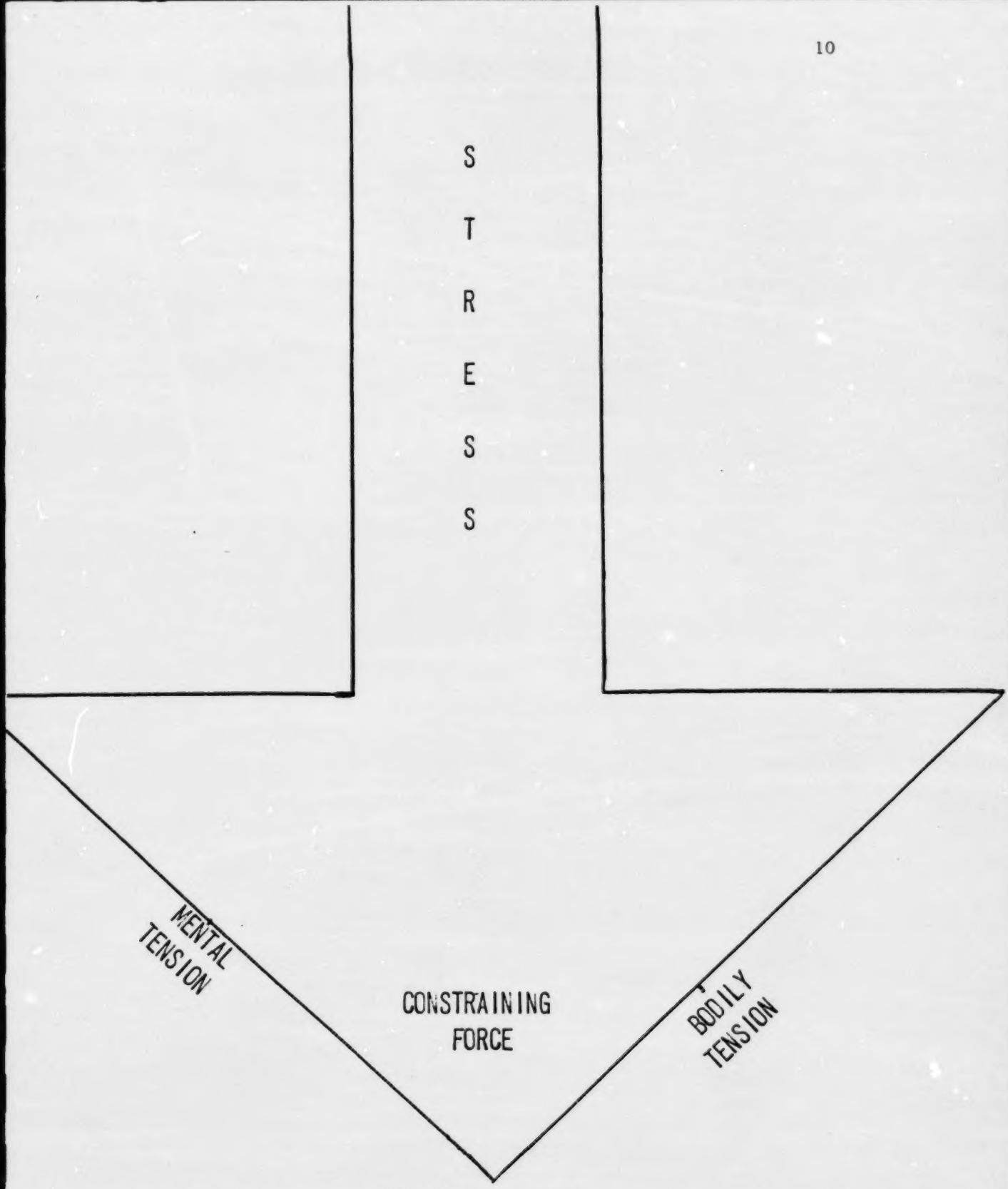
Cherry, On the Real Benefits of Eustress

Davis, Eshelman, and McKay, The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook

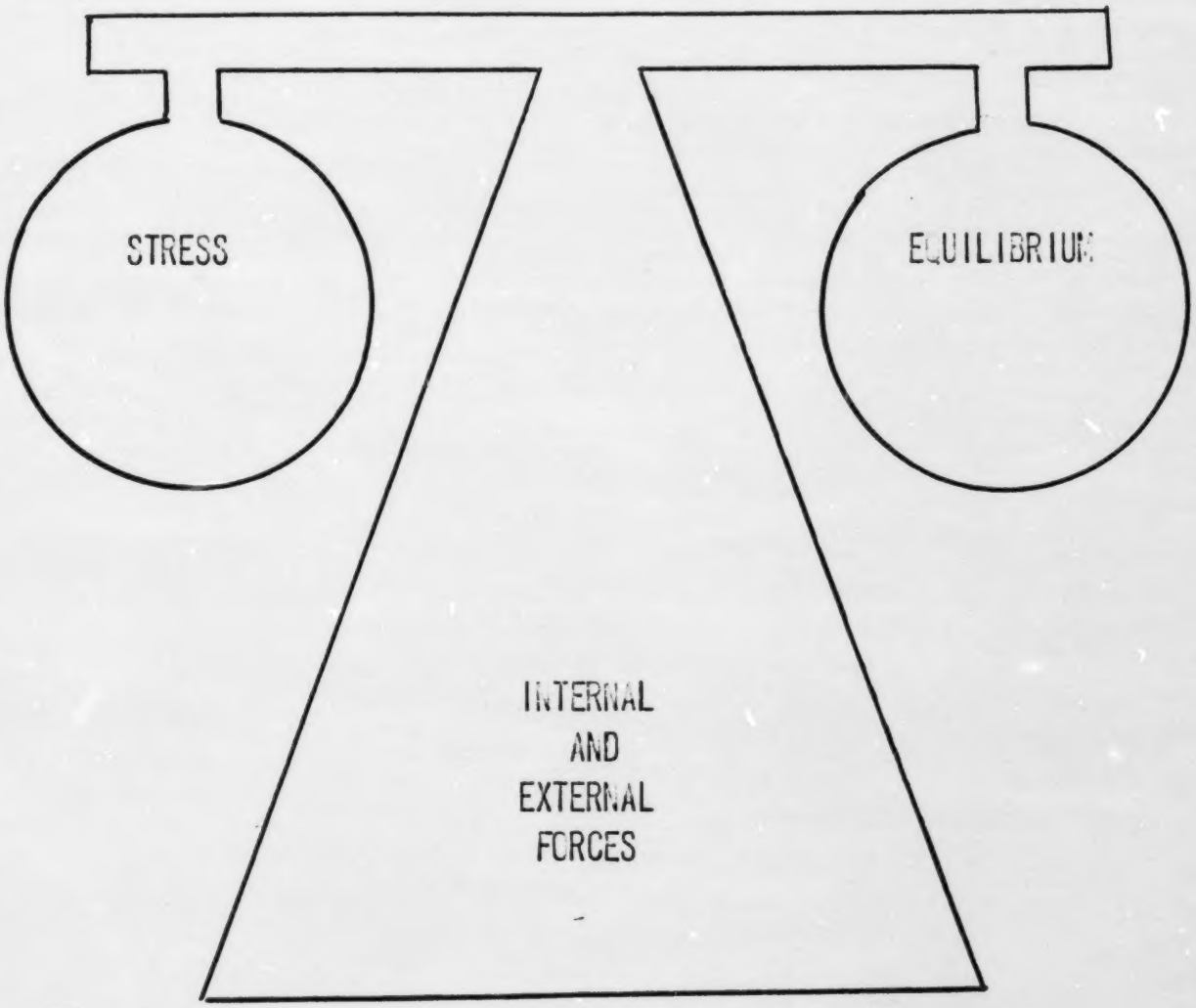
Holmes and Rahe, The Social Readjustment Rating Scale.

Salye, The Stresss of Life

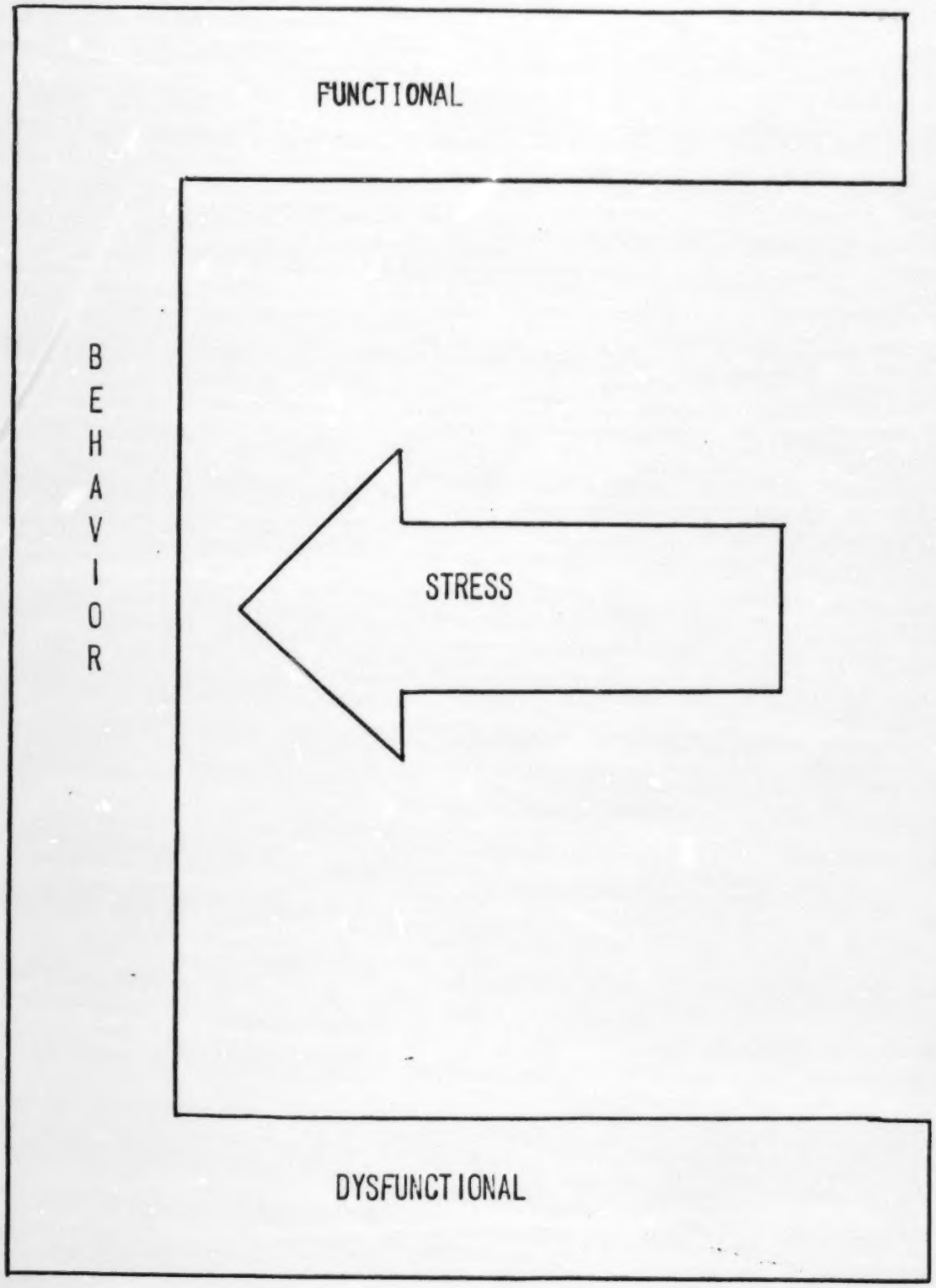
Sparks, Helping Clients Manage Stress: A Practical Approach



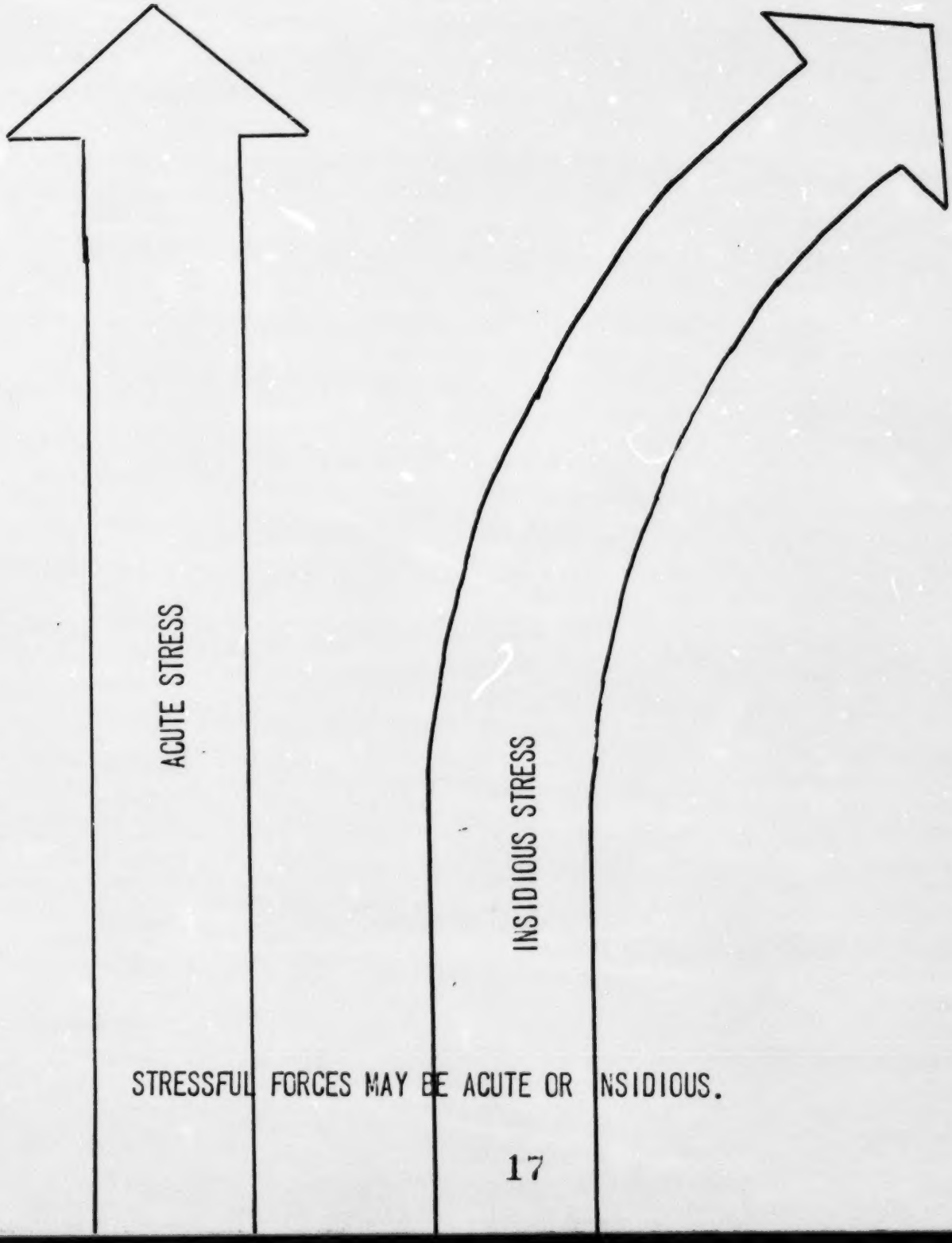
STRESS IS A CONSTRAINING FORCE OR INFLUENCE WHICH RESULTS IN A STATE OF BODILY OR MENTAL TENSION. (WEBSTER'S, 1981)



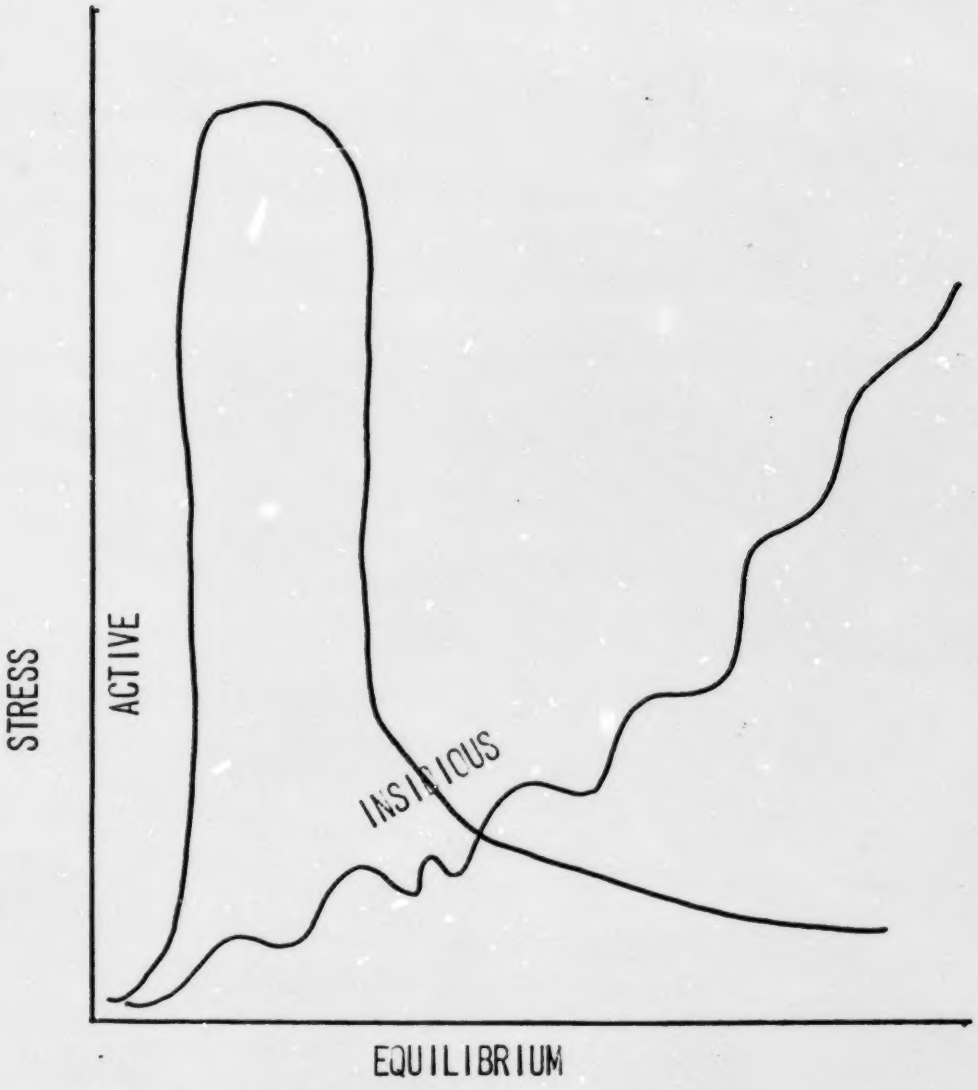
STRESS TENDS TO ALTER AN INDIVIDUAL'S EXISTING EQUILIBRIUM. IT MAY BE INTERNALLY GENERATED BY OR EXTERNALLY IMPOSED UPON AN INDIVIDUAL.



STRESS MAY HAVE FUNCTIONAL OR DYSFUNCTIONAL EFFECTS.



STRESSFUL FORCES MAY BE ACUTE OR INSIDIOUS.



INSIDIOUS STRESS IS NOT TIME-LOCKED TO "MAJOR" EVENTS. RATHER, AS AN ONGOING FORCE, IT CONSTANTLY CHALLENGES THE INDIVIDUAL'S EQUILIBRIUM. ITS CUMULATIVE EFFECTS MAY WEAKEN THE INDIVIDUAL'S EQUILIBRIUM.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS MODULE:

I. ANALYSIS OF YOUR PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

II. ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THESE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

III. ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EFFECTS OF STRESS

IV. ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS DESIROUS OF CHANGE

V. IMPLEMENT ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINES FOR DESIGNING YOUR PERSONAL STRESS REDUCTION PLAN

SECTION II

COGNITIVE METHODS FOR STRESS REDUCTION

Major Points to Be Perceived

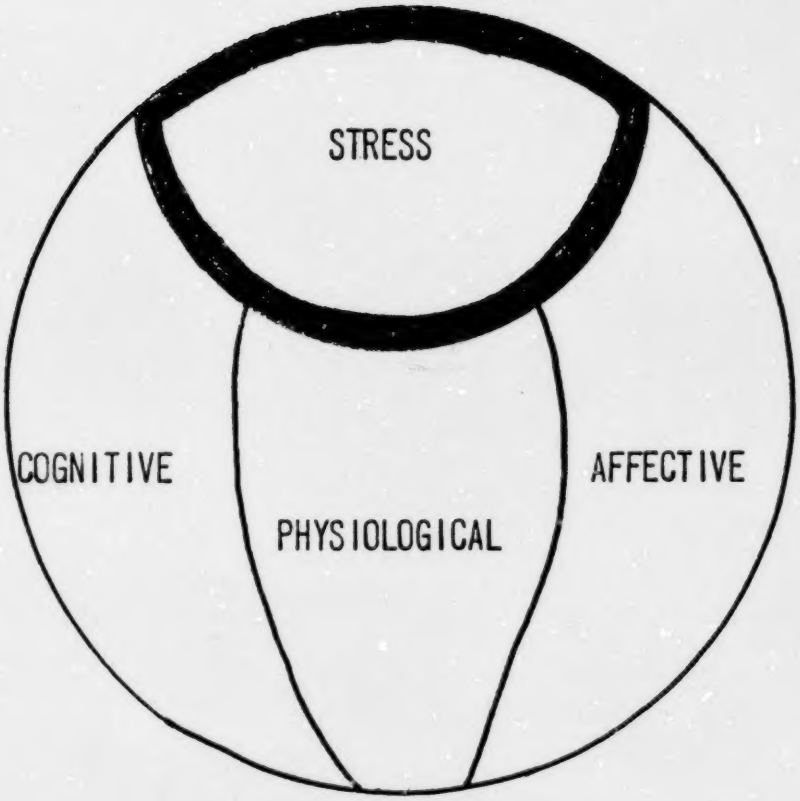
The major points to be perceived in this section include:

1. Stress can be related to an emotional continuum of reactions
2. Identification of stress requires extensive self awareness
3. Various stress reduction methods and resources exist which focus on one's cognitive domain.

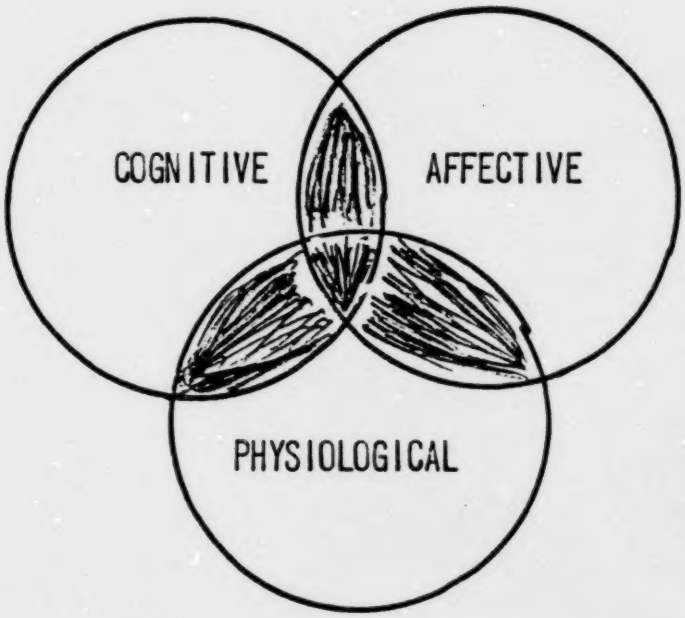
Activities

A. Introduction

The instructor should explain that the students will be completing a variety of activities related to cognitive, affective and physiological management of stress. The instructor should also explain that while the three domains are interactive, each will be dealt with separately to facilitate an understanding of how each can be used in stress reduction. Master transparencies are provided on pages 17 - 18.



DIMENSIONS OF STRESS



THE INTERACTIVE NATURE OF STRESS

B. Identifying Stress Patterns

Using the preliminary information on pages 4 - 22 of the Student Text, the instructor should introduce activities for developing/conducting cognitive stress reduction strategies. For Task Sheets One and Two on pages 40 - 41, instructors may wish to modify the examples provided in the text. If the preservice students have been or are currently engaged in practicum, they should be encouraged to utilize aspects of their experiences as reference points when asked to note professional causes of stress. If the preservice student has not yet engaged in practicum, the instructor may modify the content using examples (e.g., the first grade teacher with whom the preservice student must interact makes him/her anxious or "two extremely agressive children have just been enrolled in the special education class").

For inexperienced students, the instructor may wish to describe a situation for use with Task Sheet Three. The given situation might address negative attitudes of regular educators toward mainstreamed handicapped children or obtaining special equipment needed by a handicapped child.

C. Recognizing Emotions

It is suggested that students be provided with a handout developed from the text on this section and the accompanying Task Sheets Four and Five. The instructor should provide students with a specific stress situation for completion of Task Sheet Six. An example follows:

> You are a special educator with a self-contained class of 12 handicapped students, and your aide just quit. Your principal has just informed you that special education students can only use the cafeteria prior to 10:45 a.m. so that other children will not be disturbed.

D. Identifying Stress Reduction Methods and Resources

The instructor should introduce Task Sheet Seven (page 47) using the material presented in the Student Text on identifying stress reduction methods and resources (pages 4 - 12). After students have completed the task sheet, the instructor should provide a lecture/ presentation on the Cardinal Principles Involved in Cognitively Dealing with Stress. The information in the text can be used for lecture/presentation development. The master transparency on page 21 may be used to develop a transparency to accompany your presentation. For principle six, the instructor may wish to develop transparencies of the sociograms provided (pages 48 - 51) to illustrate avenues of communication.

After the principles have been presented, students should review Task Sheet Seven (page 47) and evaluate their application of the principles. Task Sheets Nine and Ten (pages 52 - 53) could be used as a class assignment.

For Task Sheet Eleven on page 54, it is suggested that the instructor of preservice special educators specify the situation (e.g., obtaining permission for previously denied field trips). For Task Sheet Twelve on page 55, the instructor should provide answers for questions one and two. Students could then proceed with the completion of the task sheet as a class assignment.

Task Sheet Thirteen should be assigned as reading material which supplements and clarifies your lecture/presentation. Task Sheet Fourteen can then be completed. However, the instructor is encouraged to assist with goal identification. Task Sheet Fifteen should be eliminated for preservice special education students who have not yet engaged in adequate practicum.

CARDINAL PRINCIPLES FOR COGNITIVELY DEALING WITH STRESS

1. IF YOU CAN'T CHANGE SOMETHING, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
2. CONTROL YOUR OWN LIFE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
3. REMEMBER THE 10-80-10 PRINCIPLE.
4. PLAN AND IMPLEMENT CHANGE STRATEGIES, PREFERABLY WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM.
5. UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING VIEWED AS INTEGRAL TO THE RURAL COMMUNITY AND THE REGULAR EDUCATION PROGRAM.
6. RECOGNIZE POWER AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS.
7. ANALYZE THE IMPLICATIONS OF EXISTING POWER AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS.
8. UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES PEOPLE TICK.
9. LEARN TO NEGOTIATE YOUR POINT OF VIEW.
10. TURN NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS INTO POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

Task Sheet One:

The instructor may wish to substitute the Stress Inventory (Sparks, 1981), the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes and Rahe, 1967), or Selye's conception of "turtles" and "racehorses" (cited in Cherry, 1978).

Task Sheets Two and Three:

The instructor may wish to substitute the Challenge Process as presented by Sparks (1980).

Task Sheets Four, Five, Six, and Seven:

The instructor may wish to modify these task sheets by providing relevant situations or examples as previously described.

Task Sheets Eight and Nine:

The instructor may wish to substitute a matrix presentation for analyzing communicative interactions. Festinger, Schacter, and Back (1963) provide an excellent description of matrix generation including multi-dimensional multiplication.

Task Sheets Ten and Eleven:

The instructor may wish to use the information from these task sheets to create a situation in which participants develop the scenerio.

Task Sheet Twelve:

The instructor may wish to specify answers to questions one and two, as previously described.

Task Sheet Thirteen:

The instructor may wish to have participants role play a negotiation situation (e.g., increased mainstreaming of handicapped students) in which they apply the content of Task Sheet Thirteen.

Task Sheet Fourteen:

The instructor may wish to place participants into small groups for completion of this activity.

Task Sheet Fifteen:

As previously indicated, the instructor may wish to omit this activity for students with limited practicum experiences.

SECTION III

AFFECTIVE METHODS OF STRESS REDUCTION

Major Points To Be Perceived

The major points to be perceived in this section include:

1. understanding the necessity for structuring appropriate, non-threatening releases for anger,
2. understanding the need for social group support,
3. understanding the value of positive co-worker relationships,
4. understanding attitude enhancement techniques, and
5. understanding and practicing the technique of desensitization.

Activities

Utilizing the information presented in the Student Text (pages 23 - 29), the instructor should develop a lecture/presentation on affective methods of stress reduction. Pages 25 - 26 may be used to develop transparencies to augment the lecture/presentation. Following the lecture/presentation, the instructor may have participants complete the activity on applying affective strategies for stress reduction via a group or individual basis (pages 66 - 67). Frank discussions with genuine sharing of techniques useful for various members should supplement the class lecture/presentation. The instructor should encourage students to focus on examples related to careers as rural special educators.

Suggestions For Extended Use of the Items

The instructor may wish to obtain a teletrainer from the local telephone company. The faculty member and/or students can devise stress-inducing telephone calls allowing students to simulate how they would handle realistic situations. This will provide opportunities for class

discussions regarding new skills used/needed to handle spontaneous situations. The instructor may also wish to videotape such situations so that students can engage in more extensive peer feedback or self assessment.

AFFECTIVE METHODS OF STRESS REDUCTION

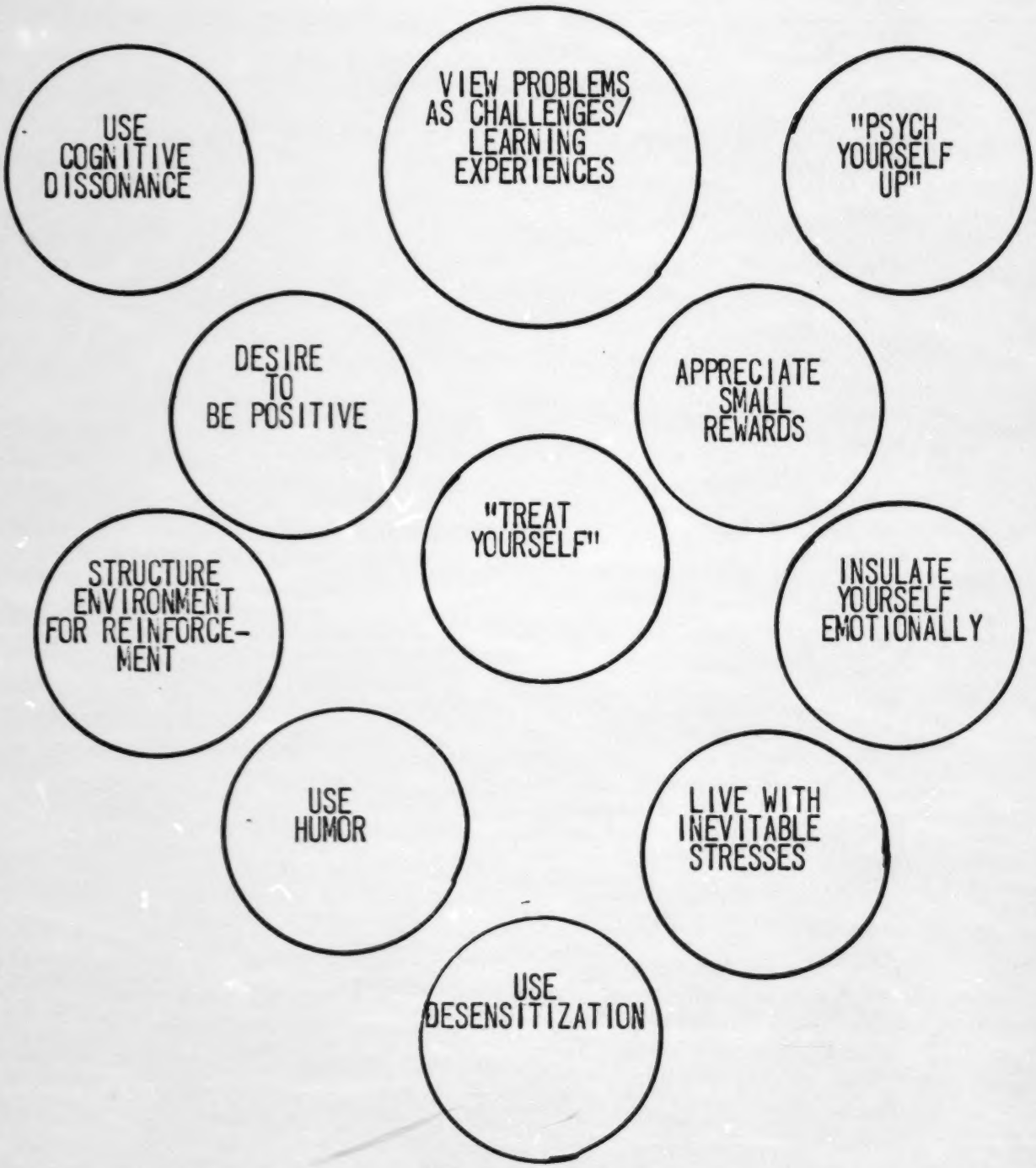
1. STRUCTURE APPROPRIATE, NON-THREATENING RELEASES FOR YOUR ANGER.

2. STRUCTURE A SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM.

3. BUILD POSITIVE CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIPS.

4. ENHANCE YOUR ATTITUDE.

5. DESENSITIZE YOURSELF TO ANXIETY-PRODUCING SITUATIONS.


USE COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
VIEW PROBLEMS AS CHALLENGES/ LEARNING EXPERIENCES
"PSYCH YOURSELF UP"
DESIRE TO BE POSITIVE
APPRECIATE SMALL REWARDS
"TREAT YOURSELF"
STRUCTURE ENVIRONMENT FOR REINFORCE-MENT
INSULATE YOURSELF EMOTIONALLY
USE HUMOR
LIVE WITH INEVITABLE STRESSES
USE DESENSITIZATION

SECTION IV

PHYSIOLOGICAL METHODS OF STRESS REDUCTION

Major Point To Be Perceived

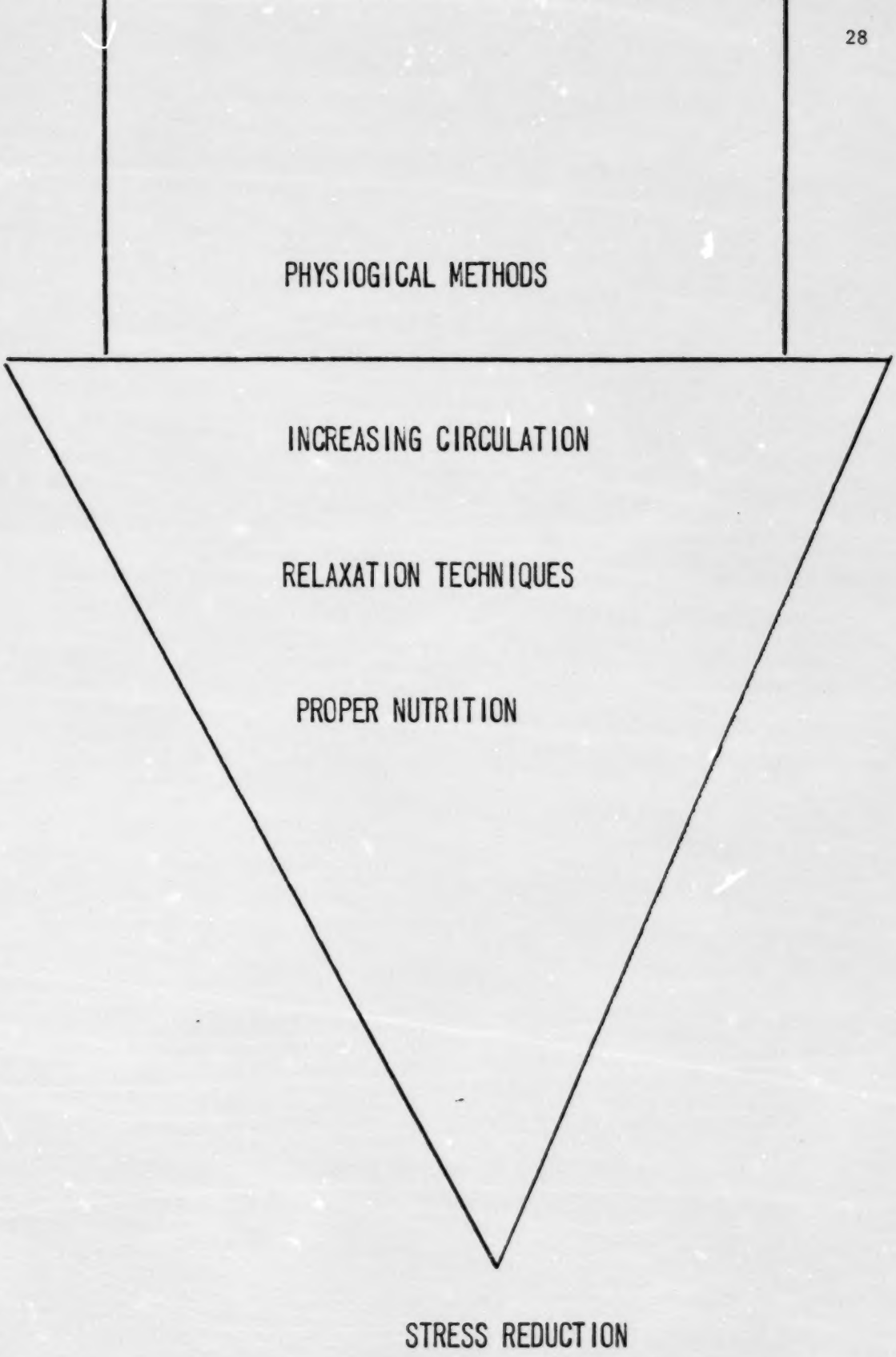
The major point to be perceived in this section is that a wide variety of approaches are available for physiological reduction of stress. These range from increasing circulation or using relaxation techniques to nutritional approaches.

Activities

To accomplish the above, it is recommended that the instructor develop a lecture/presentation on physiological methods of stress reduction based on the related Student Text material (pages 30 - 34). The material on the following page may be used to develop a transparency to accompany the lecture/presentation.

Suggestions for Extended Use of the Items

For concluding activities for this section, the instructor might wish to include materials from The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook, (Davis, Eshelman, and McKay, 1982). Students could be asked to log their experiences with a variety of physiological techniques used outside of class. The instructor's debriefing should include comparisons of success between the types of methods used.


PHYSIOGICAL METHODS
INCREASING CIRCULATION
RELAXATION TECHNIQUES
PROPER NUTRITION
STRESS REDUCTION

SECTION V

SUMMARY

Major Point To Be Perceived

The major point to be perceived in the summary is the need to apply and continuously update one's skills for stress reduction.

Activities

The instructor is encouraged to prepare summary comments using the material presented within the Student Text (pages 35 - 36). It is suggested that a student assignment include the beginning of a Personalized Master Plan for Stress Reduction. Our experience indicates that this activity is most successful when students are allowed to maintain privacy in this assignment. The instructor's feedback from the student should be concerned with how seriously the student accepted the assignment and what additional resources the student needs from the professor/class.

Suggestions for Extended Use of the Items

Students may be encouraged to implement their plans and to keep a log rating their perceptions of methods that are effective for them. As this module focuses on personal development skills, instructors may want to draw upon professional survival skills (e.g., "effectively filling downtime" in the State-of-the-Art module). Discussions could center on the advantages of using personal and professional skills simultaneously to avoid burnout.

OPTIONAL READINGS/SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Time Management

McCay, J. T. The Management of Time. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980.

Assertiveness

Alberti, R. E., and Emmons, M. L. Your perfect right. San Luis Obispo, Cal.: Impact Publishers, Inc., 1974.

Kelley, C. Assertion training. A facilitator's guide. La Jolla, Cal.: University Associates, Inc., 1979.

Sundel, S. S., and Sundel, M. Be assertive. A practical guide for human service workers. Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage Publications, 1980.

Negotiating Skills

Bacherach, S. B., and Lawler, E. J. Bargaining. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981.

Carnegie, D. How to win friends and influence people. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964.

Fisher, R., and Ury, W. Getting to yes. Negotiating agreement without giving in. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981.

Anticipating the Future

Naisbitt, J. Megatrends. Ten new directions transorming our lives. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1982.

Papert, S. Mindstorms. Children, computers, and powerful ideas. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1980.

Motivating Regular Educators to Work With Handicapped Students

Canfield, J. and Wells, H. C. 100 Ways to enhance self-concept in the classroom. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

Montgomery, M. D. "The special educator as consultant: Some Strategies." Teaching Exceptional Children. Summer 1978, 10 (4), p. 110-112.

Issues and Trends in Rural Special Education (Background/Supplementary Materials)

Helge, D. Images: Issues and Trends in Rural Special Education - January, 1983. Murray, KY., Center for Innovation and Development, 1981, 86 pp.

Warren Springs County Special Education Cooperative: A Rural Preservice Simulator, 1983, a preservice curriculum module available through the National Rural Project, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky.

The State-of-the-Art of Rural Special Education, 1983, a preservice curriculum module available through the National Rural Project, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky.

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Sontag, E. and Button, J. Office of Special Education Briefing Paper. February, 1980, 22 pp.